Approved For Release 2006/02/07 : CIA-RDP80B01554R003400080060-5

1 November 1978

MEMORANDUM FOR: National Intelligence Officer for Africa

FROM: Director of Central Intelligence

SUBJECT: Rhodesia

Attached is a column by Joseph C. Harsch on Rhodesia's problem from The Christian Science Monitor of 26 October. I would appreciate your views on whether he is accurate as to the Mtabele and Mashona relationship and if it has the importance he cites. Also, do we have the articles he mentions from History Today?

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STANSFIELD TURNER

Attachment a/s

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OPINION AND COMMENTARY

Joseph C. Harsch

Old enemies meet again in Africa

The fathers and grandfathers of the men fighting in and around Rhodesia today would understand what is going on there better than it is possible for those who live a long way off and haven't caught up on the history of that part of the world.

They would understand, for example, why a good many blacks are fighting with the Rhodesian whites and, particularly, why two prominent black leaders are cooperating with white Prime Minister Ian Smith in trying to set up a transition black-white government.

Bishop Abel Muzorewa and the Rev. Ndabaningi Sithole are on the side of Mr. Smith and the whites. And many of their supporters are enlisted and fighting in the Rhodesian security forces which last week staged probably the biggest series of attacks of the war so far into neighboring Zambia. The sorties or raids lasted three days. Rhodesian reports say the attackers struck three major black nationalist bases in Zambia and another nine satellite camps.

The objects of those Rhodesian sorties into Zambia are the followers of Joshua Nkomo. They and Mr. Nkomo are members of the tribe of Mtabele. The black leaders who collaborate with Mr. Smith back in his capital at Salisbury are members of the Mashona tribe. Most of the blacks who serve in Mr. Smith's armed forces are Mashonas.

* * *

Back in the middle of the last century when white men began pushing up from South Africa into what is now Rhodesia the Mtabele were the masters of the Mashonas. Rhodesia itself is divided roughly by a high ridge running north and south. The Mashona lived on the east side of the ridge, the Mtabele on the west. But the warrior Mtabeles considered and treated the pastoral and agricultural Mashonas as their slaves. They roamed into Mashonaland at will, taking the cattle for food and the young men for their armies.

The whites first settled in Mashonaland to the east of the ridge. They had a deal, arrangement, or understanding with Lobenguela, the last of the chieftains or kings of the Mtabele. He would let the whites live in Mashonaland if they would leave him alone.

But, according to British historian J. V. Woolford writing in the magazine History Today (August and September issues), that agreement broke down over a misunderstanding. Chief Lobenguela was willing to let the white settlers live in Mashonaland, but it never occurred to him that this arrangement deprived him of the right to take what he chose from the Mashonas. When he sent his raiding, or "tax collecting," parties to the Mashona villages, the whites objected.

That is, the white settlers became the protectors of the Mashonas against the Mtabeles, thereby depriving the Mtabeles of an accustomed source of food and manpower. The result was a short, sharp war in 1893. White troops, supported by Mashonas, marched from Mashonaland into Mtabele land, captured the Mtabele capital of Bulawayo and drove Chief Lobenguela and his warriors to the Zambezi River. He died there in 1894.

When Joshua Nkomo was born in 1915 there would still have been many a Mtabele warrior around who had fought under Chief Lobenguela against the white settlers over the right to exploit the hard-working and more docile Mashonas.

* * *

Mr. Smith wants very much to work out an arrangement with Mr. Nkomo. He has talked with him a number of times, including a trip to Zambia in August when they met secretly there. But just as efforts of the first white settlers to come to terms with Chief Lobenguela failed, so have these efforts broken down. Mr. Smith, like his white predecessors, seems to be able to get along with the Mashonas. But Mr. Nkomo comes from a more militant background. As an Mtabele and, in effect, the successor to Chief Lobenguela, he would find it difficult to accept a role as just one of a multiple executive authority in Salisbury, no better than a Mashona.

Mr. Smith would be delighted to have Mr. Nkomo as a member of his Cabinet. But Mr. Nkomo is said to believe that if he waits long enough events will make him the head man in whatever government emerges eventually in Rhodesia. He predicted during the spring that he would be in Salisbury within ten months. Last week, after the raids on his camps in Zambia, he asserted that "we intend to get to Salisbury in the time given."

British and American diplomats are still trying to get Mr. Smith and Mr. Nkomo around the same table along with the other black leaders. But at any such a gathering Mr. Nkomo would be the lone Mtabele against the old and familiar, to him, combination of whites and Mashonas — who now outnumber his Mtabeles by four to one. That helps to explain why he prefers war to the ballot box.

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Washington, D.C. 20505

1 November 1978

Dear John,

A few busy weeks have passed by while you have been happily, I hope, sailing in the Caribbean. I wanted to let you know, however, that your tremendous and successful effort on behalf of the codeword problem is something I very much appreciate. In the time since you have left, I think we have made enough progress to give me confidence we are going to be able to sell something very close to your concept to the Community, which again is a testimony to the quality of what you accomplished.

I hope to keep you posted as the project rolls on to its full consummation. In the meantime, I do thank you again for a tremendous and successful effort for which I am most appreciative. I have real confidence the United States will benefit immensely in the long run from what you accomplished in three short weeks.

With warmest regards.

Yours,

Stan

STANSFIELD TURNER

General John W. Vogt, USAF (Ret.)

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Approved For Release 2006/02/07 : CIA-RDP80B01554R003400080060-5

29 November 1978

MEMO FOR: Director of Security
SA/DCI/CI

FROM: DCI

SUBJECT: Repolygraph Program

Filed "DCI EYES ONLY" file.

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